

this, too, depressed morale. In June 1760, Bouquet wrote of Fort Pitt, then under construction, "The Barraks made of green Wood or bad Briks want already much Repair, and some Parts of the Works raised in haste must be pulled down & be made up again" (4: p. 603). Finally, officers and men alike had to contend with the crushing awareness of isolation that pervaded life on the frontier. The sense of being cut off from the broader world bred its own sort of desperation, as one can see in a letter that Lieutenant Lewis Ourry wrote to Bouquet from Fort Bedford in January 1759: "I hope, Sir, . . . you will have more Compassion on me than the rest of the World, & send me up a Bundle of News-Papers" (3: p. 81).

As these selections suggest, the volumes under review emphasize the workaday side of army life. Those who equate military history with the study of battles will find that the volumes contain a few reports of minor actions, but no more. They, presumably, will be disappointed. However, for those who wish to examine the army as a social institution, *The Papers of Henry Bouquet* stands as a central reference.

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*The Papers of Robert Morris, 1781-1784: Volume 4, January 11-April 15, 1782.* Edited by E. JAMES FERGUSON and JOHN CATANZARITI. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978. Pp. xxxvii, 671. Illustrations, editorial method, editors' acknowledgments, appendixes, index. \$22.50.)

Throughout the three months covered in this volume the question of whether major combat operations would occur in 1782 hung in balance. On February 6, Morris was ashamed to tell Washington that no money was available for sending Virginia troops to reinforce Nathanael Greene's southern operations. Nevertheless, one month later he lectured a state assembly leader on the importance of Pennsylvania providing revenue so that Washington could begin offensive operations early in the spring. It is not clear whether Morris was bluffing; it was not until mid-May that he would admit to a confidant that war finances were now merely a device for building a national fiscal system.

Although Britain's decision against further offensive operations

was made in the second half of February, the crisis of events in Philadelphia seems to have occurred early in that month. Morris's circular letter to the states (February 9) and plea to Congress (February 11) contained his most persuasive prose, and he had gone to the trouble of having those texts approved beforehand by Washington and administration leaders. Morris's style turned now almost to martyrology, referring always to the common cause and the risk of his personal credit. Now, he and Robert Livingston formally hired Thomas Paine to rouse the people, even though Paine was at the same time badgering Morris as the spokesman for disgruntled army officers.

There are glimpses of bureaucratic life, especially in the Morris daily diary. On February 28, he alluded to having to work late at night and even to being accosted on the street, at dinner time, by persons seeking payments. Small slips suggest that he was under pressure. He paid an express carrier even though he did not know which agency employed the man. On February 28, he entered what may well have been a Freudian slip when he wrote "Captain William Peebles." He meant Captain William Pickles. Peebles had fallen at the head of his company of Pennsylvanians on Long Island in 1776. Part of Morris's explanation for army provisions problems was that the contracts had been written in haste, and the fact that he would write the same person two and sometimes three letters on the same day proves that all was not going smoothly. Morris believed, of course, in hard work; he told the comptroller of the treasury that the way to get results from auditors was to put them in separate offices so that they "work against each other."

Only one diary entry referred to Washington's Monday evening cabinet sessions. Clearly Morris had to make himself available to Washington at all times. The commander in chief took the field April 1, but even before that his obsession with the minutiae of soldiers' equipment and conditions led him to trust entirely in "the Financier."

A personal dimension existed in 1782 which is not fully presented in these documents. On the basis of a single interview Morris concluded that the contractor Comfort Sands, later soundly denounced by Washington, was honest. Apparently he also hired his new secretary, a South Carolina refugee, on the spur of the moment. Although Morris was a close friend of the wealthy contractor William Duer, nothing personal appears between them in these documents. The many money claimants, whose pleas make up most of the diary, were rarely paid. It is not clear whether Morris was acting deviously in stalling and rejecting payments, and it is not clear whether he was motivated

by personal prejudices. Morris's own integrity was attacked only once, in a hot exchange that developed with Benjamin Harrison concerning Virginia's finances. It was not only pride that led the financier to defend himself; his personal credit supported the confederate fiscal system and the credit, in turn, depended on his reputation.

Encouraged by William B. Willcox and others who believe in high standards for published documents, I spot-checked these transcriptions against microfilm copies, especially the Library of Congress's film of its Morris Collection. Only two spelling discrepancies, which could not be justified as silent corrections, were found. On page 115, Clinton is misspelled, and on page 555 (eleventh line) "led" has been transcribed as "but" (the third letter looks as much like "t" as "d"). Only rarely have the editors inserted bracketed words, but in one situation the result is unsatisfactory. On page 365, Morris is shown writing Timothy Pickering that "... the Person acting in your Department . . . , who must be instructed to make the Payment and that he may [know?] exactly the Persons who have the Claim I send herein a Copy of the Account, . . ." Morris's scribe left no space for a missing word. If "know" is removed there is a change in meaning. Thus, "... that he may exactly (*end of phrase*) the Persons who have the Claim I send herein a Copy of the Account, . . ."

The silent correction of punctuation, although an established editorial procedure, is unfortunate because it occasionally interprets words. On page 365, in a letter from Morris to William Dunscomb, the editors silently inserted a period and capitalization to form a sentence break. The break could have been inserted at a different point. The editors produced "William Bedlow Esqr. in his Letter to me of the 31 January last mentions certain Books and Papers in his Possession which are also to be brought down. As one Journey may Answer both Purposes I desire you may apply to Mr Bedlow, deliver him the enclosed Letter, let his Books and Papers be properly put up, . . . and bring them with the others." Moving the sentence break, Bedlow, not Morris, becomes the one suggesting that two chores be accomplished on one trip. Thus, "William Bedlow . . . mentions certain Books . . . which are also to be brought down as one Journey may Answer both Purposes[.] I desire you may apply to Mr Bedlow. . . ." Similarly, on page 583, in the last sentence of Morris's first letter to James Lovell, a semicolon has been silently inserted which changes the antecedent of the pronoun "it." The editors printed "Let the Agreement be in writing and send it to me with the Bond; it shall be complied with."

The footnotes are nearly flawless. In a biographical sketch of James McClene, on pages 337-38, it is unfortunate that the editors drew some information from Robert L. Brunhouse's *Counter-Revolution in Pennsylvania, 1776-1790* (Harrisburg, 1942) because Brunhouse had confused James and Joseph McClene. They should have cited the primary source, the Minutes of the Pennsylvania Assembly, instead of a secondary work. On page 321, the editors failed to comment on a diary entry that is so startling that it demands explanation. An unidentified Mr. Reed was found to be in Burlington Gaol with a certificate for \$200,000, and Morris sent the paymaster general to try to take it away from him. How did that come about?

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*Benjamin West: A Biography.* By ROBERT C. ALBERTS. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978. Pp. xvi, 525. Introduction, acknowledgments, appendixes, notes and sources, bibliography, index. \$20.00.)

Benjamin West (1738-1820) was known as "The Father of American Art" — the "American Raphael." He grew up in the Lancaster area of Pennsylvania, lived in Philadelphia, and eventually became internationally known as the first painter from America to study in Italy. From there he made his home in London, leading a phenomenal life of good fortune and early success as the historical painter for King George III. West founded and served as president of the Royal Academy and became England's most popular painter.

Although many feel that West had the most successful career of any American artist, there has been no in-depth account of his life since his death in 1820. This is amazing since West's works were actually overpraised in his lifetime. However, they were undervalued for more than one hundred years after his death.

Robert C. Alberts has written the first comprehensive, scholarly, and soundly documented account of West's life. Centuries ago the philosopher Diogenes counseled Croesus that a man's fortune should not be evaluated until after his death. In line with this wise advice, Alberts departs from custom and commences his biography with the